



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

The Life of Andrew Jackson. By JOHN SPENCER BASSETT, Ph.D., Professor of History, Smith College. In two volumes. (New York: Doubleday, Page, and Company. 1911. Pp. xiii, 371; 375-766.)

PROFESSOR BASSETT is the first biographer of Jackson who has apparently sought to base his narrative primarily, and indeed almost exclusively, upon manuscript sources. I say "almost exclusively" because, while he frankly relies, as need may be, upon such special studies as Fish's *Civil Service and the Patronage* or Catterall's *Second Bank of the United States*, and of course cites the well-known collections of documents, debates, and presidential messages, his references to the manuscript material so far outnumber all others as to lead to the conclusion that it is manuscript, and not printed, authority or opinion that he wishes chiefly to exhibit. Of the manuscript materials, the first in extent and importance are, naturally, the Jackson and Van Buren papers in the Library of Congress; but a few other fields of lesser extent, such as the letters of Jackson to W. B. Lewis in the Ford collection in the New York Public Library, together with some papers still in private hands, have been industriously searched. To these unprinted sources are to be added the Gaines papers, published in the Nashville *Tennessean* in April, 1909, and a small collection owned by the Tennessee Historical Society, and listed, and in part published, in the *American Magazine of History*.

Of the Jackson collection in the Library of Congress, quite the larger portion relates to the period before Jackson's presidency; and to this period Professor Bassett devotes the first of his two volumes. The proportion is more even than that of Parton, who does not get to 1828 until he is a quarter of the way into his third volume; but considering the epoch-making significance of the Jacksonian period in American history, one cannot but feel that the incidents of these earlier years have been over-elaborated. What is done, however, is exceedingly well done. From the standpoint of national politics the events of first-rate importance here are the battle of New Orleans, the conduct of Jackson in Florida, and the election of 1824-1825. Of the first two of these episodes, and, with a qualification to be noted later, of the third also, Professor Bassett gives admirable accounts: the best, I venture to think, in detail, proportion, and discriminating use of material, that has yet been given. The minute narrative of the operations at New Orleans is a particularly successful piece of military description. An equally discriminating examination is made of the famous controversy between Jackson and Monroe over the Rhea letter; and Professor Bassett, who inclines to accept Monroe's version rather than Jackson's, offers a conjectural explanation of the discrepancy between the statements of the two men which has the merit of exonerating both from the suspicion of falsehood. The passage (I. 249, note) is, unfortunately, too long to

quote. On the other hand, Monroe's lack of candor, to put it mildly, in allowing Jackson to believe that Calhoun was his friend in the Seminole matter is properly condemned (I. 277).

To the period from January, 1829, to March, 1837, Professor Bassett devotes 291 of the 750 pages of his two volumes, or a little more than one-third of the whole. The same painstaking investigation and wealth of personal detail, so far as manuscript authority is concerned, are exhibited here as in the earlier portion of the work. Jackson's own draft of his first inaugural, which is printed in full (II. 425-428), affords interesting illustration of his ideas and of the changes which his official papers often underwent. I am disposed to agree with Professor Bassett's conclusion (II. 476, note) that the undated "Memorandum of points to be considered in the administration of the government", which I cited in part in my *Jacksonian Democracy* as perhaps indicative of a change in Jackson's original conception of the functions of the Cabinet, is more probably a memorandum which he made of the views of another. Upon some of the larger aspects of the subject, Professor Bassett does not allow himself to dwell. The wide scope of the democratic revolution which culminated in Jackson's time, and of which, at its climax, he was the titular leader and the embodiment; the profound constitutional significance of the struggles with the bank, with South Carolina, and with the Senate; the growth of efficiency and ruthless vigor in party organization; the modification of social ideals and methods through the expansion of western settlement, the growth of trade, and the emergence of moral or humanitarian movements like abolition or projects of social reform; and the sure development of sectionalism in politics under the attrition of industrialism on the one hand and slave agriculture on the other, are not the matters with which Professor Bassett appears to have been greatly concerned. He does, indeed, refer to them, but only briefly and without emphasis. Doubtless it is for the biographer to decide how far he shall make his biography a history also of the period; but clearly Professor Bassett has written a *Life of Jackson*, not a *Life and Times*.

The brief chapter on Personal Characteristics shows much skill in analysis. From one of its primary conclusions there will, I think, be dissent, though perhaps only by way of qualification. "Jackson", writes Professor Bassett, "accepted democracy with relentless logic. Some others believed that wise leaders could best determine the policies of government, but he more than any one else of his day threw the task of judging upon the common man. And this he did without cant and in entire sincerity. No passionate dreamer of the past was more willing than he to test his principles to the uttermost" (II. 700-701). Is it quite the case that Jackson "threw the task of judging upon the common man"? That he was influenced in his own opinions by the fundamental opinions of his day is, of course, as true of him as of all great popular leaders; but is there any conclusive evidence that he really yielded to the

popular judgment on any crucial question? Is it not the fact, rather, that his opinions on public questions were essentially his own, and that, by sheer force of will and the happy chance of opportunity, he so commended his ideas to the masses that the masses came to think them their own? Symonds, speaking of the contrast between the real Caesar Borgia and the "radiant creature" of Machiavelli's "political fancy", observes acutely that Machiavelli, in *The Prince*, "cherished the ideal image of the statesman which he had modelled upon Caesar, and called this by the name of Valentino". The criticism is not without aptness in estimating the relation of Jackson to the masses whom he led.

WILLIAM MACDONALD.

The Annexation of Texas. By JUSTIN H. SMITH. (New York: The Baker and Taylor Company. 1911. Pp. ix, 496.)

EXCEPTIONAL opportunities and laborious industry have enabled Dr. Smith to give us a solid and comprehensive history of the annexation of Texas, based on a minute study of practically all the sources. Every phase of the subject is painstakingly, and, in most cases it seems, conclusively covered. As gathered by the present reviewer, his most important conclusions, which agree in the main with recent investigations based on narrower sources, may be stated as follows: (1) The Texas revolution was "a legitimate measure of self-defense" against the despotism of Santa Anna. (2) The rebels were aided by people of the United States, and there were "no doubt substantial violations of the neutrality law", but these "cannot be shown to have been the fault of our national authorities". (3) "Very good reasons existed" for the recognition of Texas in March, 1837, and Jackson did well in following the implied advice of Congress to recognize it. (4) Sectional influences caused the rejection of the Texan overtures for annexation in 1837, but by 1844 annexation sentiment was "largely non-partisan". (5) British interest in Texas was very great, and though Aberdeen's government seems not to have entertained the idea of annexing Texas, in 1844 it calmly contemplated war, if necessary, to prevent its annexation by the United States. (6) Tyler's desire to effect annexation, therefore, though partly due to personal and political ambition, was backed by patriotism and sound statesmanship; and "the method adopted to avert the peril was the most available and very likely the only effectual one that could have been devised". (7) Actually Texas was independent at the time, and the annexation treaty violated no principle of international law. (8) "Real opposition to the acceptance of Texas makes but a very small showing" in the rejection of the treaty, domestic politics being mainly responsible for its failure. (9) There was "no clear-cut issue between annexation and anti-annexation" in the election of 1844, and Polk's victory was not an endorsement of "immediate annexation"; nevertheless, "a large majority of the people" were "in favor of accepting